



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO
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12 Oct 01

Dear Colleagues:

Are you ready?

The recent atrocities in New York City, Washington, DC, and the Pennsylvania countryside have prompted many Americans to ponder the ultimate issues of life and death. Our people are asking tough questions—questions often framed in terms of "Why...?" Satisfactory answers to the "Why?" questions aren't easy to find. Fortunately, the consolation we bring is seldom based on answering these questions; consolation more often comes to the grieving in the assurance we bring that God Almighty is with them in their times of trial and despair.

As chaplains and Religious Program Specialists responded to the pastoral needs of victims and their families, they demonstrated their readiness for crisis ministry. And we have learned valuable lessons reflecting on the consolidated, joint ministry response to the chaos and destruction at the Pentagon and World Trade Center. Are you ready for a similar crisis, should one occur in your area? Have you met with the chaplains in your area (of all services) to formulate a Crisis Response Plan? If not, please do so. Our Commander-in-Chief has given the order: Be ready!

Navy chaplains are actively involved in funerals for Sailors and Navy civilians. Our staff prayer times each week are reaching new depths and drawing us even closer to each other. The sadness of the past month has been leavened by God's presence as the Divine Comforter, bringing consolation to the grieving. God's presence was powerfully evident in Thursday's Pentagon Remembrance Service. Chaplain Iasiello's benediction was a fitting conclusion to a memorable service of stirring music, and inspiring messages from President Bush, Secretary Rumsfeld, General Myers, and Lieutenant General Van Alstyne. Chaplain Iasiello prayed:

"Loving and merciful God,
in this moment of great human suffering and spiritual need,
people of faith throughout the world have turned their
minds and hearts to You;
and You have heard our cries.

Continue to heal the brokenhearted, and console those who have
suffered great personal loss...
Shield those who now go into harm's way...
Inspire those who lead our Nation...Enable them to keep their
intentions pure...
May You bless and strengthen America;
 that at her hour of need she may remain a beacon of hope
for the huddled masses,
 and a template of justice for all the nations of the earth
that seek to govern
 in peace, in freedom, in justice and in love.
In Your Great Name...Amen"

I am proud of you and all you do for those you serve. We pray
for you, your families, and your commands. Please stay alert,
pray often, and show appreciation to those around you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B C Black". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "B" and "C".

BARRY C. BLACK
Rear Admiral, CHC, U.S. Navy
Chief of Navy Chaplains